

Chapter 3: THE SPORT OF SWIMMING

3.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the structure of the sport of swimming and then in greater detail the role of Scottish Swimming and an outline of its programmes.

3.1 The Structure of the Sport of Swimming

British Swimming is the National Governing Body of Swimming for all disciplines of swimming (swimming, diving, synchronised swimming, open water and water polo) in Great Britain. Scottish Swimming, which is the National Governing Body (NGB) of swimming in Scotland, the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) which is the NGB of swimming in England and the Welsh Amateur Swimming Association (WASA) which is the NGB of swimming in Wales are all members of British Swimming.

The main role of British Swimming is its responsibility for the elite level of all the disciplines within the sport i.e. swimming, diving, open water swimming, synchronised swimming and water polo. Each NGB, i.e. Scottish Swimming, the ASA and WASA, looks after all levels and disciplines of the sport within its own country including the elite level in cooperation with British Swimming.

As we move away from our own country (Scotland) we come to **British Swimming** which looks after British level competition, Great Britain teams etc. and as we move further afield to the continent that we are part of, Europe, we then belong to the **Ligue Européenne de Natation** (European League for Swimming / LEN) and on the worldwide level where we belong to the **Fédération Internationale de Natation** (FINA). LEN is the European governing body for the 51 Swimming Federations in the countries that make up the continental mass of Europe. FINA is the international governing body for all the federations from all 5 continents (Asia, Europe, Africa, Americas [N and S] and Australia). These organisations unite the countries of Europe for European Championships (LEN) and the countries of the world for World Championships (FINA) in the different disciplines of the sport. FINA also sets the International Rules of the Sport so that when countries come together to compete they are all working to the same rules. For this reason it is usual that each nation adopts FINA's rules as its 'Laws of the Sport' relating to stroke technique and competitive practice.

Scottish Swimming
..... **British Swimming**
..... **LEN** **FINA**

3.2 Scottish Swimming

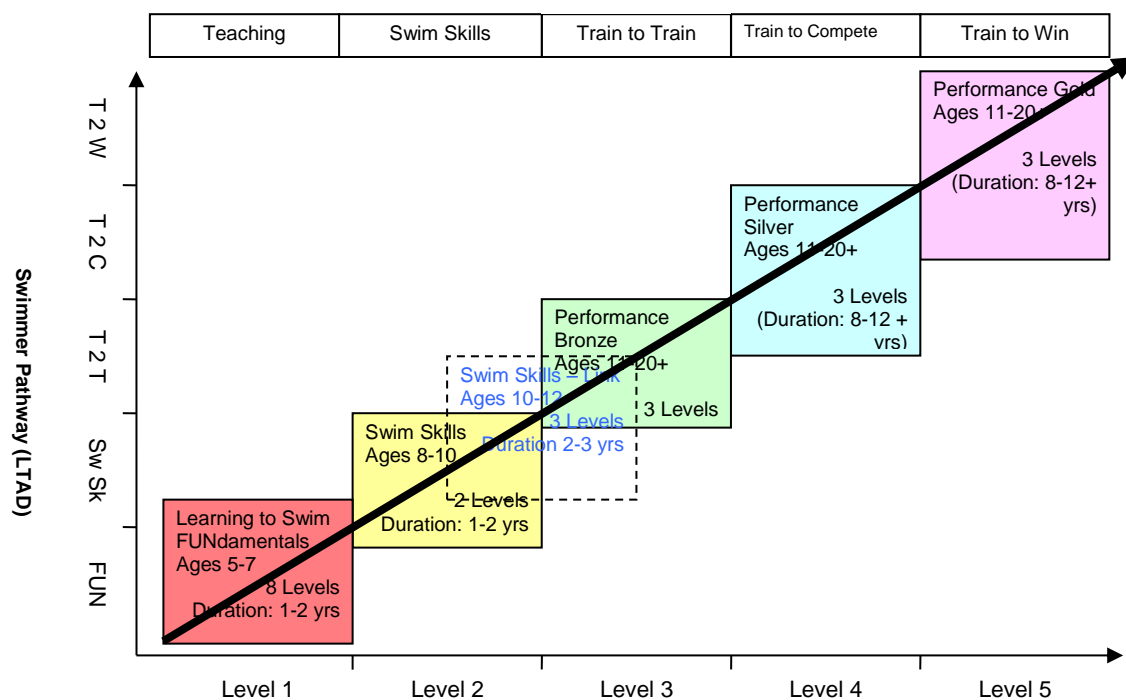
Scottish Swimming, or the Scottish Amateur Swimming Association, is the National Governing Body of the sport in Scotland. It is made up mainly of the members of all the affiliated swimming clubs in Scotland. The national governing body of a sport is the guardian of the sport in its country. It is up to the national governing body to protect and develop the sport and promote it. It is the technical expert and generally the recognised authority in its specific sport.

Scottish Swimming is a member of British Swimming. Scottish Swimming is divided into 4 districts, East, West, North and Midlands, which operate at the more local level and organise District Championships. Scottish Swimming has a number of main roles to play in the sport and in the development of swimming.

These roles include:-

- The selection and preparation of Scottish teams
- The organisation of Scottish Championships
- Teacher and coach education
- Training of technical officials
- Development of volunteers
- Development of clubs
- Development of programmes such as 'learn to swim' e.g. the new Learn to Swim Framework.
- Development of pathways to aid participants to reach their potential

3.2.1 Scottish Swimming's Swimmer Pathway



3.3 Scottish Swimming's National Framework (New in 2015)

"Swimming is a sport for all and a sport for life and adopting this framework will encourage individuals to remain in the sport, whether as a competitor or for the fun, fitness and friendship element, as well as producing new role models on the world stage."

National Framework for Swimming in Scotland

The National Learn to Swim Framework for Scotland is an all-inclusive pathway providing opportunities for everyone to participate in any aquatic discipline they choose, at whatever level they aspire to. To support this rationale the National Framework provides a structure in which schemes of work for Scottish Swimming lesson programmes can be developed. This outlines objectives that work with the core philosophy of firstly establishing core aquatic skills prior to attempting to developing efficient stroke technique and later going on to develop a wider range of aquatic competences. The National Framework links to the training of swimming teachers by Scottish Swimming, resources provided by Scottish Swimming to aid the development of core aquatic skills and to the Scottish Swimming Awards Scheme including the Triple S (Scotland Safe Swimmer) Award.

Inclusive pathway:

Scottish Swimming National Learn to Swim Framework is all-inclusive and has the vision of developing opportunities and providing a progressive pathway for people with a physical, sensory or learning disability.

A host of CPD's are available to help enable teachers to become more aware and knowledgeable so that all have access to quality swimming programmes.

Common Sense Principles:

- The programmes are inclusive and should accommodate the needs of many swimmers with special needs. If the needs are very severe and the learner requires a lot of additional attention main stream classes may not be the best situation for them. Where pupils with special needs have additional support in the school classroom they might require similar additional support (e.g. a helper in the water) in the swimming lesson. The nature of the needs require to be discussed to ensure that they can be managed safely within the class programme. Swimmers with additional needs often require extra support. There may be occasions when manual handling is necessary but always discuss, plan and prepare before you assist.
- If assistance is needed always think, plan and prepare in advance and assist for the shortest possible distance. Not all swimmers require 1:1 support, floatation devices may be more appropriate. If extra assistance is required it must be given in full view of all and with the consent of the swimmer and or parent/carer.
- Encourage and motivate swimmers to try tasks independently and provide them with the skills and confidence to enable them to do this.
- Encourage swimmers to use own arm and leg strength, even if this is limited it is important that they continue to exercise as many muscle groups as possible.

- On a wet poolside ensure assistance is offered to anyone with balance problems.
- Be positive and observe ability first.
- Focus on ability do not focus on disability.
- Learn to understand disabilities a little at a time.
- Be adaptable, observe the swimmer and where necessary adapt the skill to the individual abilities. For example if a skill required is fully submerge, swimmers with spastic quadriplegia would find this difficult. Encourage the swimmer to do this to the best of their ability but do not hold them back a level based on not being able to complete the full skill as they may never be able to achieve this.
- The parents / carers are usually the experts – keep lines of communication open.
- Smile, enjoy, be safe and PERSEVERE !

Structure of the National Framework for Swimming in Scotland

Within the National Scottish Swimming Framework there are three programmes:

1. Early Years Programme: This programme is designed to support teachers to plan a programme which introduce adult and baby to a swimming environment. There is emphasis on encouraging independent movement, developing water confidence and core aquatic skills through structure play using fun, games and songs. This programme deals with children from baby to pre-school age 4+normally accompanied in the water by an adult on a 1 to 1 basis.

The **Early Years Program has 3 levels;** Adult and baby, adult and toddler and adult and child. Each level of the Early Years Program has:-

- an **overall aim**.
- 3 or 4 clearly **defined objectives**.
- broadly defined **areas of content** allocated to it.
- **specific tasks** related to it which indicate competence.

2. Learn to Swim Programme: This programme is designed to enable teachers to plan, deliver and assess progressive programmes that produce swimmers that are depending on their ambitions, either 'club ready' or 'ready for lifelong swimming'. This programme deals with pupils of approximately age 4 to age 11.

The **Learn to Swim programme** is designed to enable teachers to plan, deliver and assess progressive programmes that produce swimmers that are depending on their ambitions, either 'club ready' or 'ready for lifelong swimming'. It has 6 levels; **Developing Water Confidence and Core Aquatic Skills** (2 levels - Pre-school, Swim Skills 1), **Developing Water Confidence and Core Aquatic Skills** (2 levels - Swim Skills 2 and 3), and **Becoming 'Club Ready' or 'Ready for Lifelong Swimming'** (2 levels - Swim Skills 4 and Club Ready). Each level has:-

- an **overall aim**.
- 4 or 5 clearly **defined objectives**.

- broadly defined **areas of content** allocated to it.
- **specific tasks** related to it which indicate competence.

This is followed by a range of discipline specific programmes to prepare swimmers to join synchronised swimming, diving, water polo or lifeguarding clubs.

The Learn to Swim Program has 3 overarching National Standards; Bronze, Silver and Gold.

- **Bronze: Becoming Water Confidence** – Pre-school and Level 1 are targeted at developing core aquatic skills and water confidence:-
 - Become confident in the water.
 - Develop basic movement in the water.
 - Develop skills through a fun and progressive pathway.
- **Silver: Developing a Safer Swimmer** – Levels 2 and 3 are targeted at further developing core skills and traditional stroke technique with the aim of achieving Triple S / SSS / Scotland's Safe Swimmer:-
 - Developing the 4 strokes.
 - Developing a more competent swimmer.
 - Achieving Triple S.
- **Gold: Achieving Aquatic Competence** – Levels 4 and Club Ready are targeted at further improving stroke technique and introducing a multi aquatic approach:-
 - Becoming 'Club Ready'.
 - Water Safety Aware and proficient.
 - Pathway to lifelong participation.

3. Adult Programme: This programme is designed to help teachers formulate an all-inclusive pathway, providing opportunities for all adults to participate in swimming from beginners to masters. It follows the template of the full Learn to Swim framework and has been adapted to suit adults of all ages.

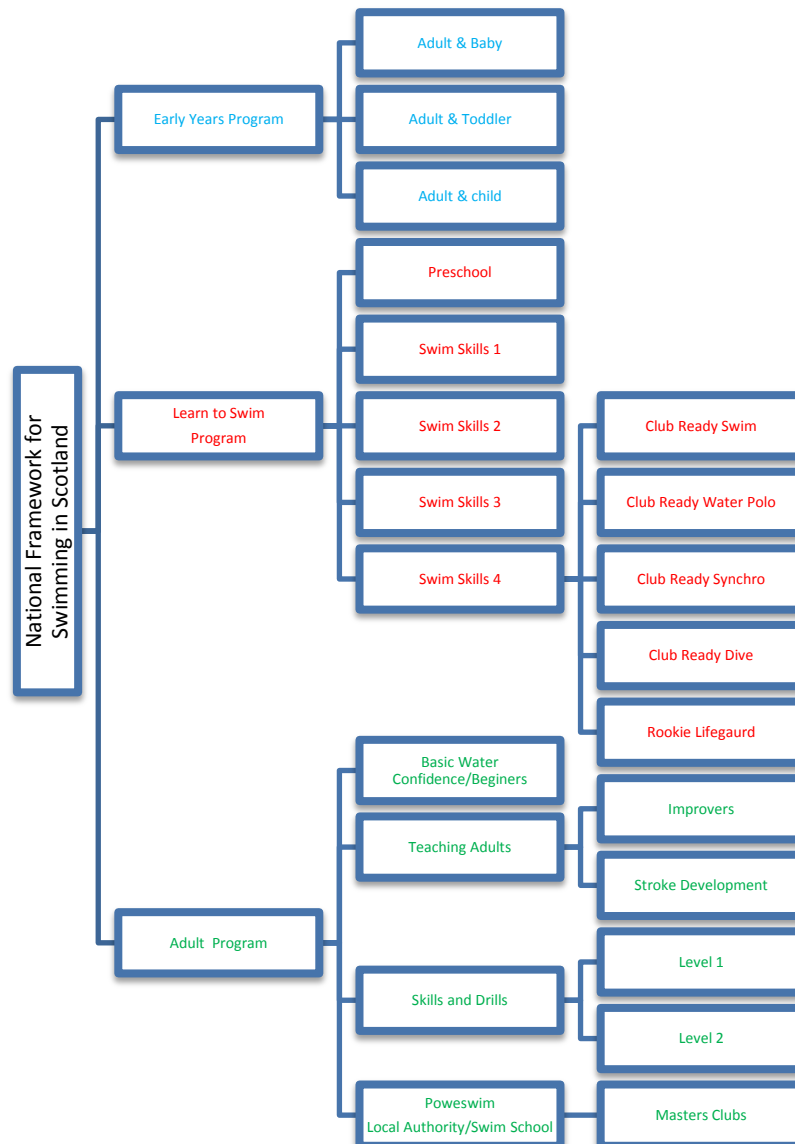
Adult Basic Water Confidence/Beginners. This stage is primarily focussed on water confidence, relaxation, streamlining and an introduction to core aquatic skills including aquatic breathing.

Adult Improvers – Stroke Development. This is a broad stage which will continue to develop water confidence and will introduce stroke technique and bi-lateral breathing.

Skills and Drills levels 1 & 2. This stage will develop lane etiquette, learning to use equipment such as kickboards/ pull buoys/fins, efficient stroke technique (four strokes optional) along with use of the clock. These stages will also introduce basic training programmes to develop fitness and stamina as well as continuing to improve technique. **Powerswim/Masters/Masters Clubs.** At this stage for those that wish, they will have a choice of group training sessions within a local authority programme

or will be in a position to join a Masters swimming club where there are competitive opportunities for those who choose. Each element of the adult programme has:-

- an **overall aim**.
- 4 or 5 clearly **defined objectives**.
- broadly defined **areas of content** allocated to it.
- **specific tasks** related to it which indicate competence.



Details of the programmes are available on Scottish Swimming web site.

"Developing and delivering a progressive learn to swim programme is critical for the continued success of aquatics in Scotland. This new framework develops fundamental aquatic literacy skills before developing stroke technique and proficiency in other water based activities. Swimming is a sport for all and a sport for life and adopting this framework will encourage individuals to remain in the sport, whether as a competitor or for the fun, fitness and friendship element, as well as producing new role models on the world stage."

Alan Lynn, Scottish Swimming National Coach

3.4 Scottish Swimming Awards

The Scottish Swimming Awards come in an extensive range that link to the National Framework / Learn to Swim Programme. There are various awards suited to different ages and stages of learn to swim programme. For details of awards look on the Scottish Swimming web site.

Early Years		
Adult and Baby	Adult and Toddler	Adult and Child
Preschool		
Aquafun Award	Aquafun Progress Award	Distance Award 5m
Swim Skills		
Swim Skills Level 1 Award	Swim Skills Level 1 Progression Award	Distance Award 10m
Swim Skills Level 2	Swim Skills Level 2 Progression Award	Distance Award 15m
Swim Skills Level 3	Swim Skills Level 3 Progression Award	Distance Award 25m
Swim Skills Level 4	Swim Skills Level 4 Progression Award	Distance Award 50m
Club Ready		
Club Ready Swim	Club Ready Synchronised Swimming	Club Ready Water Polo
Dive Skills 1	Dive Skills 2	Club Ready Dive

Awards are a great incentive for pupils and also serve to let parents know how their child is progressing. It is important however that they are not overused so that they do not become the sole reason for doing things, i.e. it is important that we are teaching the child and dealing with the needs of the child, that we are teaching the desired programme to meet pupil needs and that we are not simply teaching 'an award'. A programme / lesson should not be made up simply of the tasks in an award – that would be a very limited programme. Any badge / certificate / award is the **additional** reward and the tangible element of the reward for the achievement of the programme (within which the skills actually tested for the 'badge' were only a part of the work covered).

Awards motivate pupils and inform parents

The 'examining' or 'testing' of the award requires to be firm but fair. It is not an achievement for a child to get an award when they know that they cannot do all the elements of it and did not really deserve it as much as their classmates. There is much greater achievement in working a bit more at the task and finally mastering the skill and obtaining the award. Imposing excessive standards (i.e. making the task extra difficult) or turning a blind eye to deficient skills (i.e. somehow not noticing that the child is not able to do the distance or complete the skill) are equally unacceptable and make the awards of no value to anyone.

Firm but fair assessing of awards

3.5 Scottish Swimming Certification of Teachers and Coaches

The United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC) is now part of the education of teachers and coaches in most sports. A centrally controlled system whereby qualifications operate to the same syllabus and standard although administered and delivered by the separate home countries has moved sport in Britain forwards. Scottish Swimming therefore administers the UKCC swimming teaching qualifications in line with the standards and syllabus agreed for all the UK Home countries.

The training provider is Scottish Swimming and the qualifications are awarded by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). The qualifications are on the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

These UKCC qualifications are based on sound principles related to the training of teachers and coaches. The content of the course is focussed on the current knowledge related to long term athlete development, skill learning, performance development etc. as well as the technical aspects of swimming. This increased focus on understanding of principles and HOW to teach and coach, as opposed to only focussing on WHAT to teach and coach, should significantly improve the approach of teachers and coaches in the future and thus help our learners and performers to achieve.

The structure of levels (level 1, level 2 etc.) is one where the role of the teacher /coach evolves as they gain knowledge and experience and are capable of taking responsibility for more people and more complex situations.

- Level 1: - for new teachers and coaches of swimming who can then act as an assistant to a more qualified teacher / coach i.e. work in a situation where they can continue to learn while the teach
- Level 2: - for teachers and coaches of swimming who can work alone taking responsibility for the planning and delivery of safe and effective sessions
- Level 3: - for more experienced coaches of swimming, who is able to plan, deliver and evaluate annual programmes

Other aspects of teacher / coach education and qualifications are also delivered by Scottish Swimming. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) seminars are offered by Scottish Swimming, often in conjunction with the Local Authorities. These are to update teacher's knowledge and competence.

3.6 SwiMark

SwiMark is a programme for clubs and other organisation that requires them to reflect on the processes that they operate and the standards they have achieved. It ensures that they are following good practice and provides the opportunity for all involved to achieve their potential. Achieving swiMark provides evidence to others, such as potential customers, of the standards of excellence achieved. Benefits of swiMark for clubs / other organisations can be summarised as follows:

- It raises the profile of the club
- It raises public confidence in the club

- It creates safer 'quality' clubs for all
- It builds a strong structure to support the development of clubs
- It helps the club to engage in its own development
- It gives confidence in what the club offers and how the club operates for both the committee and club members
- It assists clubs in attracting external funding
- It assists with succession planning in club management
- It will help to increase membership levels in the longer term
- It highlights and develops good practice in swimming
- It will help promote school/club links (Accredited clubs are normally the first invited to work with local schools and schools are being encouraged to signpost pupils to accredited clubs)
- It provides extra support through the Scottish Swimming team / staff
- It will help attract and retain qualified coaches and provide opportunities for development
- All swiMark clubs can utilise the swiMark logo and take advantage of other brand resources to help generate publicity
- It promotes a volunteer culture where hard work and dedication is recognised
- Many funding agencies state that applicants must be accredited to a governing body or local authority scheme
- More and more local authorities and other leisure operators give priority-booking slots to accredited clubs. Some also offer discounted rates for facility hire.
- It allows access to bursaries for UKCC courses Access to CPD and Seminars
- Discounted Team Manager Courses
- It provides access to Child Protection Courses / Certificate awarded to club
- Education voucher for £300 awarded to club

There are 3 levels of involvement in the SwiMark process. These are:-

- **Affiliation**
- **SwiMark**
- **SwiMark Plus**

1. **Affiliation:** Affiliation to SASA will require a club to demonstrate that safe operating standards are in place.

Affiliation criteria:

- Club complies with the objectives of SASA to advance swimming
- Club complies with the objectives of SASA to oppose drugs in sport
- All members must be registered with SASA
- Club operates a grievance procedure
- A Child Protection Officer must be appointed
- Club be subject and bound to the SASA constitution and bye-laws

- Club complies with the Company Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics
- The management committee may take action against any club member infringing regulations

2. **SwiMark:** Clubs wishing to benefit from further support should demonstrate a commitment to creating a sustainable swimming development pathway by following the principles of swiMark.

swiMark criteria:

- To have affiliated to SASA
- Licensed *Level 2 coach / teacher
- Annual electronic membership return
- Equity policy Code of Conduct for volunteers
- Coaching personal development plans
- Funding for coach education
- Role descriptors for all positions within the programme (Committee, Teacher and Coaches, Volunteers)
- *Teacher/Coach Licensing in Scotland (Information available on Scottish Swimming website - www.scottishswimming.com)

3. **SwiMark Plus:** This level will help the club to demonstrate a commitment to the principles of a community club whilst encouraging members to stay within the club structure and ensure swimmers continue to train and compete at their chosen level.

swiMark Plus criteria:

- To have affiliated to SASA
- To have achieved swiMark
- To have a 4 year development plan
- To have a Coach and Volunteer recruitment strategy
- To have disability awareness training
- To have positive policies for the disadvantaged
- To produce an annual budget and report
- Team manager
- Evidence of Community Partnerships
- All coaches licensed
- Coach performance reviews
- Athlete recruitment and retention strategies
- Disabled athletes able to access programmes
- Exit strategies for swimmers
- On-going education for swimmers, coaches and parents.
- Doping information